

² The Form CA-2 noted the right shoulder, but in a statement received on February 6, 2020 appellant clarified that it was actually the left shoulder that should have been noted on the Form CA-2.

her condition on May 21, 2014 and realized its relation to her federal employment on July 19, 2019. Appellant did not immediately stop work.

By decision dated April 14, 2020, OWCP denied appellant's claim, finding that the medical evidence of record was insufficient to establish causal relationship between her diagnosed medical condition and the accepted factors of her federal employment.

Appellant subsequently requested reconsideration. By decisions dated October 8, 2020 and August 11, 2021, OWCP denied modification of the April 14, 2020 decision. In both decisions, it referenced appellant's prior claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx815.³ OWCP indicated that OWCP File No. xxxxxx815 remained open for medical care.

The Board has duly considered the matter and concludes that this case is not in posture for decision. OWCP's procedures provide that cases should be administratively combined when correct adjudication of the issues depends on frequent cross-referencing between files.⁴ For example, if a new injury case is reported for an employee who previously filed an injury claim for a similar condition or the same part of the body, doubling is required.⁵ In the present claim, appellant alleged injuries to her left shoulder. OWCP had previously accepted: sprain of the left shoulder and upper arm; AC impingement syndrome left shoulder; strain of unspecified muscle, fascia, and tendon at shoulder and upper left arm; sprain of unspecified rotator cuff capsule; and unspecified rotator cuff tear or rupture of left shoulder under OWCP File No. xxxxxx815. However, it has not administratively combined the present claim with her previously accepted claim pertaining to her left shoulder for which she continues to undergo treatment.

For a full and fair adjudication of appellant's current claim, this case shall be remanded to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record OWCP File No. xxxxxx329 and OWCP File No. xxxxxx815.⁶ Following this and other such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision.⁷

³ OWCP File No. xxxxxx815 involves a claim for a May 21, 2014 traumatic injury to appellant's left shoulder when she was moving a patient while in the performance of duty. OWCP accepted: sprain of the left shoulder and upper arm; AC impingement syndrome left shoulder; strain of unspecified muscle, fascia, and tendon at shoulder and upper left arm; sprain of unspecified rotator cuff capsule, and unspecified rotator cuff tear or rupture of left shoulder. It authorized arthroscopic subacromial decompression on July 16, 2015 and manipulation under anesthesia on October 7, 2015 and February 10, 2016.

⁴ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c) (February 2000).

⁵ *Id.*; *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *R.G.*, Docket No. 19-1755 (issued July 7, 2020); *L.M.*, *supra* note 5.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the August 11, 2021 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: April 21, 2022
Washington, DC

Alec J. Koromilas, Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Janice B. Askin, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board